

Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D – Ore.) and Tri-Met have learned today that the US Department of Transportation has proposed \$80 million for the I-205/Downtown Mall MAX line and another \$27.6 million for the Washington County Commuter Rail as part of their proposed Federal Transit Administration (FTA) FY2007 budget. “I could not be prouder of our regional community,” Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D – Ore.) said. “Every year, we face increased competition for federal transportation dollars and our success as a region is due to the hard work of transportation officials and citizens alike. I’m delighted that the U.S. Department of Transportation has recognized and rewarded the good work done here.

“This funding also ensures that we’ll have a full range of public transit options to serve our region: bus, streetcar, an expanded light rail system, and now, commuter rail,” Blumenauer added. “We’ll need all of these to continue to meet the travel demands of a growing region.”

The proposed budget announces FTA’s intention to enter into a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA), or a long-term funding commitment, for both projects. These FFGAs guarantee FTA’s funding commitment for the life of the project. Only five projects nationwide were listed for this distinction.

Overall, the Bush administration’s 2007 budget, presented to Congress yesterday, proposes \$1.5 billion for transit programs nationwide. In addition to the New Starts program, the proposed budget includes funding for 23 existing transit projects nationwide, including the completion of Portland’s Interstate MAX transit line.

A complete list of projects recommended under FTA’s Annual Report on New Starts is available online at www.fta.dot.gov.